



Maryland Department of Transportation
The Secretary's Office

Martin O'Malley
Governor

Anthony G. Brown
Lt. Governor

Beverley K. Swaim-Staley
Acting Secretary

August 19, 2009

The Honorable Roger Berliner
Councilman
Montgomery County Council
100 Maryland Avenue, 6th Floor
Rockville MD 20850

Dear Councilman Berliner:

Thank you for your letter to Governor Martin O'Malley regarding proposed new legislation or regulations to enhance coordination between state and local governments on land use and transportation policies and programs. The Governor was pleased to receive your letter and has asked me to respond to you on his behalf.

The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) certainly shares the concerns and interests expressed in your letter. As you well know, Maryland is a growing state and the ensuing debate over if, how, and when to use our land has been intense and ongoing. Please know that MDOT welcomes a sincere and ongoing discussion of the issues that surround your letter. We appreciate your apparent willingness to move this discussion forward and will look forward to continued conversation on these issues with you and our partners in the Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) and the Maryland Municipal League (MML).

I believe you may also know that as a key partner in Governor O'Malley's Smart, Green and Growing initiative, MDOT has been actively pursuing innovative approaches to promote sustainability and transportation choice. Our programs and planning initiatives to promote transit, rideshare, and hiking/biking trails, and to improve local communities through multi-modal streetscape and transit-oriented development projects, reflect a deep and long-standing commitment to the principles of Smart Growth, sustainability and environmental stewardship. As you mentioned, the State Highway Administration has also taken great steps forward to responsibly address congestion and access management. As a rule, we support project development practices that are multi-modal and context-sensitive.

Despite these accomplishments, we certainly recognize that we must increase our efforts to achieve the safe, sustainable and efficient transportation network that Maryland deserves. Today's economic, environmental and energy issues present us with new challenges that may require new models for assessing long-term strategic needs. In response to new mandates emerging from the Maryland Commission on Climate Change and the Maryland Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction Act of 2009, MDOT has been actively investigating strategies and practices to promote sustainable transportation and reduce mobile source greenhouse gas emissions. Our work with these initiatives, as well as with the Task Force for Future Growth and Development, includes exploring a "carbon pricing" program, review and expansion of existing Smart Growth initiatives, and an aggressive transit expansion and transit-oriented development strategy. We would welcome your active participation in the planning and policy work required to evaluate and implement these and other strategies to meet these recently legislated mandates.

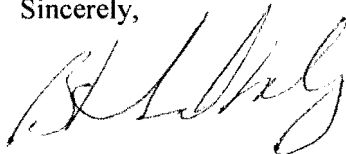
My telephone number is 410-865-1000
Toll Free Number 1-888-713-1414 TTY Users Call Via MD Relay
7201 Corporate Center Drive, Hanover, Maryland 21076

In this regard, we were particularly interested to learn of your interest in the corridor-level planning efforts underway in Oregon and its potential applicability to the Rockville Pike/Wisconsin Avenue corridor. The approach resonates on several levels with work we have been pursuing in connection with our response to the Climate Action Plan. In consultation with several partners, MDOT has begun to articulate a process for a unique corridor study that assesses land use and transportation strategies, tentatively called "green corridors." We envision an intensive corridor-level study that includes modeling to assess trade-offs associated with a range of coordinated land use and infrastructure investment strategies. Because of the strong local partnership such a study (and ultimately an implementation program) would require, your letter reaffirms our initial assessment that the Rockville Pike/Wisconsin Avenue corridor could be a strong candidate for review as part of this effort. Current budgetary constraints, however, are limiting our ability to move forward with such a program at this point. We are currently seeking support for this effort from our Congressional delegation. We will, however, be doing everything within our means to ensure that existing efforts are consistent and well-coordinated towards realizing the coherent long term vision for the corridor.

Finally, I would like to thank you for your favorable remarks regarding our efforts to address the transportation challenges associated with the Base Realignment and Closure Act (BRAC) activities in Bethesda. As you note, SHA has been working diligently to address anticipated impacts of the proposed expansions at the National Naval Medical Center. This effort has recently resulted in the creation of an interagency group including representatives from the Montgomery County Planning and Transportation Departments, the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority, the National Institutes of Health and the U.S. Navy along with other stakeholders, to coordinate improvements in the Bethesda area. For the Rockville Pike/Wisconsin Avenue corridor, our modal administrations have been coordinating closely with many of these same agencies, as well as the White Flint Partnership and City of Rockville, to address needs and potential options for the corridor.

We are hopeful that changes at the federal level that are foreseen as part of the transportation reauthorization process will help establish a clearer mandate and process by which to analyze and prioritize sustainable transportation outcomes. We encourage your participation in shaping this legislation, and look forward to your partnership and support in helping achieve Governor O'Malley's vision of a Smart, Green, and Growing State of Maryland. If you should have any question or comments please feel free to contact me or Mr. Don Halligan, Director of Planning and Capital Programming at 410-865-1275 or dhalligan@mdot.state.md.us.

Sincerely,



Beverley K. Swaim-Staley
Acting Secretary